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May 27, 1966

Mr. Marion Johnson
The National Archives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Examination of the Zapruder slides took more time than anticipated and I had to leave the Archives without seeing you, but I did make numerous attempts to reach you by phone. One line remained busy and the other did not answer. I shall be in Washington later today and will seek you and the copies of the documents from Documents 371. Meanwhile, I want to thank you and the Archives for the helpful and cooperative reception.

As always, each time I seek an answer I have more questions, and like Documents 371, so it is with the Zapruder film. I would like to add to the suggestions I made yesterday. While I still believe it is desireable to study this movie in slow motion and offer my own Bolex Zoom for this purpose, I also believe it is desireable for analysts to be able to stop this film on single frames, which the Bolex does not permit. My reasons are these: As Zapruder himself suggested in his testimony, each step away from the original reduces distinction that much more. If you made a 16mm print from the 8 mm copy LIFE gave the government, while you can project a larger image, it cannot be as clear as that projected by the 8mm print, which, in turn, cannot be as clear as the LIFE original. About speed, I believe the opposite from the desired effect is obtained by having the first of the three versions at fast motion and that one of the ~~motion~~ versions should be in slow motion, with the frames replicated. This, I believe, is especially true of the frames beginning around 190 and before and after 313. One of the things that perplexed me is that at frame 313 the President's head made rapid motions generally in both a backward and a ~~forw~~ forward direction. The unfortunate effect of the motion-picture version as now arranged is similar to that of an ancient Biograph film. But in each of the three versions, to me there is a suggestion of speed that is faster than my recollection of the testimony and faster than my own experience with my own 8 mm films.

Hence I would like to know whether the movie version contains all the frames of the Zapruder film, especially because the slides do not. If any frames are missing, I should like to know which ones, both from the entire film exposed by Zapruder and from any sections after the beginning and before the end. It is my impression that he exposed more film than I saw and that some was missing after the beginning and before the end. If this is the case, I should like to see the original film supplied by LIFE and will supply my projector in advance for this purpose. I should also like the opportunity to obtain for you, if you cannot do so, an 8mm projector that will safely stop on individual frames.

In Volume 18 the Commission prints frames 171 through 334 of this film with 208-211 eliminated and 212 altered and 207 inexplicably marred. These seem to be the frames we saw in stills and I wonder if these are the only frames on the 16 mm

version you projected for us? Quite obviously, these missing frames exist, and the doctored frames also exist in their unaltered form. For example, in Volume 18 on page 89 there is a version of frame 210, but it is so small it has no meaning. Why was it necessary to splice frame 212? What caused the bluish alteration of frame ~~22X~~ 207 and its consequent lack of clarity? These do not appear to be the stills supplied by LIFE, which, unless my recollection errs, were 35mm black and white. From what were they made and by whom? May I see the LIFE stills?

In general, all these frames seem to me to be remarkably less clear than those printed by LIFE, and I should hope that some means might be available by which the permanent archive of such a major event in our history would contain the best possible record, for now and for the future.

Have these films been examined by many wounds ballistics experts, to your knowledge? I am curious about the rapid motion of the President's head from what the Commission says is a single shot, for it is in opposite directions.

Possibly you do not have the answers to my questions, for these may be only what the Archives was supplied. But I know no other agency to which to direct them.

Again I want to thank you. I hope in the near future to be able to see the other pictures, at least those not under restriction, including all those of the actual assassination that are printed.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg